

and you're paying for it through higher—because the Federal Government has got a huge, huge share of health care spending.

See, when I first went to Washington, I said, "Well, this is a local issue. The Governors can take care of it." But then I realized all these frivolous lawsuits and the defensive practice of medicine and the increase of premiums for docs are costing us billions of dollars a year at the Federal level—through Medicaid, Medicare, and veterans spending, for example. So medical liability is a national problem that requires a national solution. And I look forward to working with United States Senator Mark Kennedy to make sure health care is available and affordable for Minnesota patients.

There are three branches of Government, as you know. Well, some of them back there think there's four branches. [*Laughter*] The Constitution recognizes three branches. [*Laughter*] I'm proudly part of the executive branch. You'll be proudly part of the—he is a part of the legislative branch. And we've got to make sure that the judiciary—judicial branch of Government functions the way the framers of our Constitution wanted it to function, and that is to have people who serve on our bench who are not going to try to legislate but who will strictly interpret the Constitution of the United States of America.

I look forward to working with the United States Senator Mark Kennedy, who will make sure that the judges I name, those strict constructionists, those who will not try to legislate from the bench, are given an up-or-down vote on the floor of the United States Senate and confirmed—judges like John Roberts and Judge Sam Alito.

So I've come to thank you for supporting a good man. I've come to lay out my opinion, and that is, he's the right person for the job. He thinks right. He acts right. He's not one of these kind of politicians that takes a poll and then tries to figure out what to believe. We got too many of those in Washington, DC. We need straight shooters, people of principle, and people who care deeply about the State of Minnesota. And that person is Mark Kennedy.

Thanks for coming, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:34 p.m. at the Hilton Minneapolis Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Senatorial candidate Kennedy's wife, Debbie, and his daughter, Sarah; Gov. Timothy Pawlenty and Lt. Gov. Carol Molnau of Minnesota; Rudy Boschwitz, head of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

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## Digest of Other White House Announcements

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The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

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### December 3

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to Camp David, MD.

### December 4

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush attended the Kennedy Center Honors Gala at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

### December 5

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Greensboro, NC, where, upon arrival, he greeted USA Freedom Corps volunteer Winfield Rose.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Kernersville, NC, where he participated in a tour of the John Deere-Hitachi Construction Machinery Corp. excavator assembly line. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

### December 6

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing followed by a hurricane briefing. Later, in the Yellow Oval Room, he and Mrs. Bush participated in an interview and photo shoot with *People* magazine.

In the afternoon, at the historic Evermay house, the President attended a Republican National Committee luncheon. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he met with Jewish educators.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt of Belgium to the White House on January 17, 2006.

The White House announced that the January 11, 2006, visit of Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to the White House has been rescheduled for January 13.

### **December 7**

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil to discuss the upcoming World Trade Organization ministerial conference in Hong Kong. Later, he had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President had lunch with Vice President Dick Cheney. Later, he participated in a photo opportunity with White House interns.

Later in the afternoon, in the Residence, the President met with congressional leaders to discuss legislative priorities.

In the evening, the President hosted a holiday reception at the White House.

### **December 8**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel of Austria. Then, in the Roosevelt Room, he participated in a briefing with Republican Members of Congress on the war on terror.

In the afternoon, on the State Floor, the President hosted a holiday reception for White House staff.

In the evening, on the State Floor, the President hosted another holiday reception for White House staff.

### **December 9**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld. He then participated in a photo opportunity with Make-a-Wish-Foundation children.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Minneapolis, MN, where, upon ar-

rival, he greeted USA Freedom Corps volunteer Nancy Sager.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, the President hosted a holiday reception.

The President declared a major disaster in Alaska and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe fall storm, tidal surges, and flooding on September 22–26.

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### **Nominations Submitted to the Senate**

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NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

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### **Checklist of White House Press Releases**

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The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

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#### **Released December 5**

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Fact sheet: President Bush's Agenda for Economic Growth

Fact sheet: Progress on the 9/11 Commission Recommendations

#### **Released December 6**

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of Prime Minister Verhofstadt of Belgium